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SERVICE DATE - FEBRUARY 13, 2004

DO

FR-4915-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-32 (Sub-No. 97X)]

Boston and Maine Corporation—Abandonment Exemption—in Middlesex County, MA

[STB Docket No. AB-355 (Sub-No. 29X)]

Springfield Terminal Railway Company—Discontinuance of Service Exemption—in

Middlesex County, MA

Boston & Maine Corporation (B&M) and Springfield Terminal Railway Company (ST) have filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F—Exempt Abandonments and Discontinuances for B&M to abandon and ST to discontinue service over a line of railroad, known as the Tewksbury Branch, extending from milepost 0.0 to milepost .75, in Middlesex County, MA. The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Code 01876.

B&M and ST have certified that: (1) no local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) there is no overhead traffic on the line; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line (or by a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the line either is pending with the Board or with any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of complainant within the 2-year period; and (4) the requirements at 49 CFR 1105.7 (environmental reports), 49 CFR 1105.8 (historic reports), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 CFR 1105.12

(newspaper publication), and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

As a condition to these exemptions, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment or discontinuance shall be protected under Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protects affected employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) must be filed.

Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on March 17, 2004,¹ unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,² formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),³ and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29 must be filed by February 23, 2004. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be

¹ Pursuant to 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(2), the railroad must file a verified notice with the Board at least 50 days before the abandonment or discontinuance is to be consummated. While the applicant initially indicated a proposed consummation date of March 16, 2004, because the verified notice was filed on January 27, 2004, consummation may not take place prior to March 17, 2004.

² The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption's effective date. See Exemption of Out-of-Service Rail Lines, 5 I.C.C.2d 377 (1989). Any request for a stay should be filed as soon as possible so that the Board may take appropriate action before the exemption's effective date.

³ Each OFA must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at \$1,100. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

filed by March 4, 2004, with the Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to applicants' representative: Katherine E. Potter, Esq., Iron Horse Park, North Billerica, MA 01862.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void ab initio.

B&M and ST have filed an environmental report which addresses the effects, if any, of the abandonment and discontinuance on the environment and historic resources. SEA will issue an environmental assessment (EA) by February 20, 2004. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to SEA (Room 500, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423-0001) or by calling SEA, at (202) 565-1539. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.] Comments on environmental and historic preservation matters must be filed within 15 days after the EA becomes available to the public.

Environmental, historic preservation, public use, or trail use/rail banking conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, in a subsequent decision.

Pursuant to the provisions of 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), B&M shall file a notice of consummation with the Board to signify that it has exercised the authority granted and fully abandoned the line. If consummation has not been effected by B&M's filing of a notice of consummation by February 13, 2005, and there are no legal or regulatory

barriers to consummation, the authority to abandon will automatically expire.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at

“WWW.STB.DOT.GOV.”

Decided: February 5, 2004.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams

Secretary